

Reaching More Illinois Children

Learning does not end when school lets out. Neither does the need for good nutrition. The *Summer Food Service Program* (SFSP) offers nutritious meals and snacks to low-income children during the summer months and long vacations. Often, these children receive meals through the School Breakfast Program or the National School Lunch Program, and may be at risk of hunger during the summer months. The SFSP brings Federal dollars into communities in the form of combined reimbursements for meals and operations/administrative costs. Community leaders can help by making SFSP a priority.

FY 2010 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Participation

Total Number of Eligible Kids	995,000	Actual Participants	56,000
Eligible Non-Participants	939,000	Participation Rate	5.67%
Total Meals Distributed	4,427,000	Total Reimbursement	\$ 9,963,000

Increase in SFSP Participation Reduces Risk of Food Insecurity

Extremely low participation in SFSP means that millions of eligible kids are going without the meals and snacks they need to thrive during the summer months. In most cases, the State Department of Education oversees the SFSP in cooperation with community partners and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Community leaders can help by getting the word out about the program; providing staff or volunteers to manage sites; purchasing or preparing meals; or encouraging schools, community and recreation centers, and faith-based organizations to sponsor new SFSP sites.

The shortage of SFSP sites and low participation means that small increases in the overall participation rate will garner dramatic results. For example, nationally, approximately 11% of all eligible kids participate in the program. If the participation rate were to increase to about 16%--an increase of 5 percentage points--an additional 1.3 million kids would be added to the program for a total of over 3.6 million children enrolled. The chart below enumerates possible similar gains in your state.

Illinois			
Relatively Small Increases in the SFSP Participation Rate Produce Significant Increases in the Number of Children Served and in Federal Funds			
5% -- Increase in SFSP Participation Rate			
Total Participants	106,000	Participation Rate	10.67%
Additional Meals	221,000	Additional Reimbursement	\$ 498,000
10% -- Increase in SFSP Participation Rate			
Total Participants	156,000	Participation Rate	15.67%
Additional Meals	443,000	Additional Reimbursement	\$ 996,000
15% -- Increase in SFSP Participation Rate			
Total Participants	205,000	Participation Rate	20.67%
Additional Meals	664,000	Additional Reimbursement	\$ 1,494,000
Full Participation			
Additional Meals	74,231,000	Additional Reimbursement	\$ 167,058,000
Please note that these participation figures are derived from SFSP data only and do not reflect children or meals distributed via the National School Lunch Program during the summer.			

FNS strongly urges local government and community leaders to expand SFSP. For more information on how you can help, please contact your state (www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/contacts/statedirectory.htm) or FNS' Office of Strategic Initiatives, Partnerships and Outreach at partnerships@fns.usda.gov.